(c) what are the dates of sending the panels to the SLC-cum-Secretary, OSB, Punjab and what action has been taken against this violation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The merit panels in all the six cases in question were received by the SLC-cum-Secretary, OSB, on or before July 10, 1995, and despatched to the concerned oil companies on July 10, 1995, for further action. The delay in finalising the merit panels by the OSB is being looked into.

Guidelines to State Govts. on the Treatment to Tribals

355. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONEMNT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Governemnt have conveyed any guidelines to State Governments on the treatment to be meted out to tribals living in remote forests for centureis;

(b) whether it is also a fact that some State Governmetns are not respecting tribals rights to continue to stay in tribal villages, and

(c) what steps are proposed to ensure that tribals are not harassed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Yes Sir. Detailed guidelines on'Tribal Forest Interface' to State Governments and Union Territories have been issued in September, 1990.

(b) No report has been received regarding non-recognition of tribal rights by any State Government.

(c) Following steps are being taken to protect interests and rights of tribals and forest dwellers.

(i) In order to prevent degradation of forests, contract system would be completely removed and be replaced by institutions such as Tribal Co-operatives, Labour Co-operatives and Governemnt Corporations for harvesting of forest produce.

(ii) Protection, regeneration and collection of Minor Forest Produce along with institutional arrangements for the marketing of such produce.

(iii) Development of forest villages on par with revenue villages.

(2) Indian Forest Act, 1927 provides for legal recognition of rights and concessions for tribals and forest dewellers.

(3) Central Government is committed to policy of Joint Forest Management for protection and development of forest resources with active participation of local people.

"Efforts to Minimise Pollution by Old Vehicles"

356. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of already registered vehicles in four Metropolitan cities which do not and cannot be fitted with Catalytic Converters for using unleaded petrol; and

(b) the measures proposed to be taken by Government to minimise pollution levels of these already licensed old vehicles?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) The total number of registered petrol vehicles in the four major metropolitan cities of Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras as on 31st March 1994 is given below:

METRO	TOTAL VEHICLES (In lakhs)
Delhi	22.39
Bombay	6.08
Calcutta	7.16
Madras	6.89

The Government has, from 1.4.1995, permitted the registration of only those new four-wheeler petrol vehicles in these four metropolitan cities which have been fitted with catalytic converters and designed to use unleaded petrol. By and large, it has not been considered technically feasible or economically viable to retrofit older vehicles with catalytic converters, bearing in mind Indian conditions and the economic costs involved not being commensurate with the environmental advantage realised. It has been felt more advantageous to concentrate on ensuring that new vehicles are fitted with catalytic converters and allowing older vehicles to be gradually phased out.

(b) The measures being taken for control of pollution from on-road vehicles include the following:

(i) State Transport Authorities have been asked to enforce the standards stipulated for on-road vehicles.

(ii) Lead level is planned to be reduced to a maximum of 0.15 grammes per litre in petrol to be supplied throughout the country by December, 1996.

(iii) Intensive awareness campaigns have been launched by Transport Departments of cities including Delhi, to educate people about the statutory punitive provisions related to vehicular pollution, health hazards and about the measures for keeping the emission levels low.

(iv) Various Government Departments have been asked to get the vehicles in their administrative control checked regularly and suitable measures be taken to ensure that the emissions are within the prescribed limits.

(v) A major survey was carried out by the Central Pollution Control Board on the pollution caused by automobiles in the major cities and towns in the country. The findings of the Survey have been used to prepare comprehensive programmes for control of pollution in the major cities.

(vi) City planners have been advised to incorporate in their plan the long-term requirements of mass transportation.

(vii) Steps have been initiated to introduce compressed natural gas in petrol driven vehicles in some of the cities.

Complaints registered by National Human Rights Commission

357. SHRI MOHAMMED AFZAL Alias MEEM AFZAL: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of complaints registered by the National Human Rights Commission and thereafter forwarded to Government during the 1994-95; and

(b) what action has been taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) and (b) The National Human Rights Commission registered a total number of 6987 complaints during 1994-95. The Commission does not forward the complaints to Government. It calls for reports on the complaints from the concerned authorities wherever warranted and makes appropriate recommendations. Whenever recommendations are received from the Commission, appropriate action is taken by the Government as required under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.